

Greetings! We had a very exciting and successful Junior Festival in March with lots of great music making. I would like to thank the ensemble managers and assistant managers, in particular Deanna LeBlanc, Katie Tolles, Adam Call, Robert Raymond, and Andrew Villamaino, for all their work to help make the Festival another memorable experience for our students. I would also like to thank Bill Carr and his students at West Springfield High School, as well as Dr. Benedict Smar and the music education students at UMass Amherst for being outstanding hosts.

The end of the academic year is not only a time for reflection on the challenges and successes that took place, but also a time of celebration for deserving individuals. Congratulations to Carl Jenkins, director of music for the North Adams Public Schools and director of bands at Drury High School, on being this year's recipient of the Western District Outstanding Educator Award. Carl has built a program in North Adams based on excellence and high standards. He has served the membership and students several times over the course of his career as manager of several District and All State ensembles. His teaching and service have been inspirational and we wish him all the best in retirement.

We also wish to congratulate those who are just beginning to embark on a career in music education: our MMEA-WD scholarship recipients. Congratulations to Karly DeAngelo from Minnechaug Regional High School, Stephanie Mailhot from Belchertown High School, and Erika St. Denis from Amherst Regional High School. We wish you all the best in your college studies and look forward to working with you as colleagues in the field.

Congratulations also to the Western District members who will be serving on the MMEA state Board of Directors for the next two years: Karen Atherton, Steve Damon, Jeffrey Holmes, and Carol Toth. The state organization will benefit from your efforts and representation.

Be sure to download the revised Western District Handbook from the District website. The layout and language of the Handbook have been revised for clarity and consistency with current District procedures. Special thanks for Brian Messier, subcommittee chair, and the District Handbook revision subcommittee for their work.

Now that the state association has revised its bylaws using the correct legal language for a tax-exempt non-profit organization, the District will revise its own bylaws. If you are interested in serving on the District bylaw revision subcommittee, please contact Bill Love, Chairperson-Elect, at wlove@ware.k12.ma.us.

On behalf of the District, I would like to thank Brian Messier, Claire-anne Williams, and Kayla Werlin for their selfless service by serving on the Executive Board as Chairperson-Elect, Brass/Woodwind/Percussion Coordinator and Choral Coordinator, respectively. The members of the Western District and their students have greatly benefitted from your time and efforts. Thank you also to Bill Love, Ken Michna, and Ann-Marie Desautelle for volunteering to serve the District in these important positions.

MMEA is a member-driven organization, sustained by members (such as those stated above) that give their time for the benefit of our membership and our students. Many members in our District have contributed in their own way and there is always room for other members to contribute as well. There's always something you can do in our District, no matter how busy your schedule is or what level you teach – from being an assistant manager to leading a sectional. Consider being more active in the District. We

will all benefit from your skills and expertise. If you've been active in the District before, now is the perfect time to get back in and get involved.

We also rely on you for feedback and suggestions. What suggestions do you have to improve our District for our membership and our students? Please e-mail me at districtchair@hotmail.com with your input. Our organization is only as strong as your involvement.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer season! Take care and all the best to you.

Dan